

USCIRF Calls for Increased Protection of Iraqi Religious, Ethnic Communities

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<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20090815/uscirf-to-iraq-increase-protection-of-all-religious-ethnic-communities/index.html>

The **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** said it is deeply concerned about the recent upsurge of sectarian violence in Iraq and has called for an “increased protection” of all religious and ethnic communities in Iraq.

USCIRF, an independent, bipartisan panel commissioned by U.S. federal government said among the most recent bombings, a village outside of Mosul inhabited by Shabak, an ethnic and predominantly Shiite minority, was completely destroyed by two large truck bombs, killing at least 28 people and injuring at least 150. In addition, a café in the Yazidi town of Sinjar was attacked by two suicide bombers, killing at least 21 and injuring at least 30. The Yazidi are a small religious minority indigenous to northern Iraq.

These incidents came a month after seven Iraqi Churches in and around Baghdad city were targeted with a series of bomb killing four and injuring another dozens on 12 July.

“The Iraqi government must do much more to prevent a return to escalating sectarian conflict,” **said Leonard Leo, USCIRF chair.**